

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended)) A process for producing iron oxide-containing pellets comprising agglomerating fine ore particles in the presence of a binder system to form green pellets, and heating said green pellets in stages to a final temperature in the range of about 1,275-1,350°C, wherein said binder system is substantially free of hydrophobic liquid and comprises
 - (i) an inorganic binder and/or an organic binder, and
 - (ii) a binder additive selected from boron-containing compounds, calcium fluoride, and combinations thereof, wherein the boron-containing compound is selected from boron oxide, calcium borate, sodium borate, boron nitride, and mixtures thereof.
2. (currently amended) The process according to claim 1 wherein the binder additive boron-containing compound is selected from sodium tetraborate, calcium tetraborate, and mixtures thereof.
3. (currently amended) The process of claim 1 wherein the binder additive boron-containing compound is sodium borate.
4. (currently amended) The process of claim 1 wherein the binder system comprises a carboxymethyl-cellulose as an organic binder.
5. (currently amended) The process of claim 1 wherein said binder system comprises carboxymethyl cellulose a cellulose ether and a binder additive selected from boron-containing compounds, calcium fluoride, and combinations thereof selected from boron oxide, calcium borate, sodium borate, boron nitride, and mixtures thereof.

6. (original) The process according to claim 5 wherein the cellulose ether is carboxymethyl cellulose or a salt thereof.
7. (currently amended) The process of claim 53 wherein said sodium borate is sodium tetraborate.
8. (withdrawn) The process of claim 1 wherein the boron-containing compound is calcium borate.
9. (withdrawn) The process of claim 8 wherein said calcium borate is calcium tetraborate.
10. (currently amended) The process of claim 1 wherein said binder additive boron-containing compound is derived from ulexite, colemanite, Gerstley, Laguna Murray's, Gillespie, or and mixtures thereof.
11. (currently amended) A process for producing iron oxide-containing pellets comprising agglomerating fine ore particles in the presence of a binder system to form green pellets, and heating said green pellets in stages to a final temperature in the range of about 1,275-1,350°C, wherein said binder system is substantially free of hydrophobic liquid and comprises
 - (iii) carboxymethyl cellulose or a salt thereof, and
 - (iv) a binder additive selected from ~~boron-containing compounds, calcium fluoride, and combinations thereof,~~ wherein the boron-containing compound is selected from sodium tetraborate, calcium tetraborate and mixtures thereof .